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SUBJECT: SECURITY COUNCIL ADOPTS BURMA PRST

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The Security Council adopted a Presidential Statement (PRST) May 2, in advance of Burma's upcoming constitutional referendum, calling on the regime to permit the participation of all political actors and demonstrate respect for fundamental political freedoms. This action followed a month of intensive USUN bilateral engagement with Chinese PermRep Wang and Special Advisor Gambari in order to win Chinese backing. Shortly after the adoption of the PRST, Burmese PermRep Swe circulated a letter to the Security Council "greatly regretting the course of action taken" and complaining that "powerful members" of the Security Council had pressured the others. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) In a May 2 meeting of the Security Council, following earlier preparatory work by Ambassador Khalilzad with Chinese PR Wang, Ambassador Wolff called for immediate adoption of the revised text of a PRST on the political process in Burma. He emphasized that the referendum was only days away and the Council must adopt the text immediately to have any impact. He explained that the text was the result of extensive consultations and comprised key elements drawn from the Council's previous statements, as well as the Burmese statement to the Council promising a "free and fair" referendum.

¶3. (SBU) Chinese PR Wang said that the Chinese, despite principled opposition to the Council dealing with Myanmar, were willing to consider the adoption of a brief, constructive PRST for the sake of Council unity, but argued the current draft was too explicit. Wang also reiterated China's longstanding position that the matter is not a threat to international peace and security, the good offices mission was established according to a General Assembly mandate, and there have been positive developments in Burma since the Council's October statement. Indonesian PR Natalegawa stressed the importance of a "collective" Council view and echoed the Chinese call for a constructive text that would have a positive impact on Burma. France and Belgium offered supportive statements for the text of the PRST. The Italian PermRep, in a misfired attempt to be helpful, supported the Chinese request for modifications.

¶4. (SBU) The President of the Security Council, UK PR Sawers, suspended consultations in order to facilitate further negotiation of the PRST text among PermReps. In the closed negotiations that followed, Ambassador Wolff resisted attempts by the Chinese, Indonesian, and Vietnamese to remove references to "full participation of all political actors" and "fundamental political freedoms" from the text. He convinced the group that it was not enough to allow the Burmese to determine what was "free and fair," particularly in light of continued arrests, detention and intimidation in the lead up to the referendum. He reminded the Council that silence would be seen as retreating from statements the

Council had already made.

15. (SBU) After additional negotiations, the Council agreed on a compromise text (see para 6), which "underlines the need for the Government of Myanmar to establish the conditions and create an atmosphere conducive to an inclusive and credible process, including the full participation of all political actors and respect for fundamental political freedoms." Ambassador Wolff also secured reaffirmation in the text to the Council's 15 November press statement, which addresses Aung Sun Suu Kyi's situation and role.

16. (SBU) Begin Myanmar PRST text:

The Security Council reaffirms its statements of 11 October and 15 November 2007 and all the expectations expressed in those statements.

The Security Council takes note of the announcement by the Government of Myanmar of a referendum on a draft constitution in May 2008 and elections in 2010. It further notes the commitment by the Government of Myanmar to ensure that the referendum process will be free and fair. The Security Council underlines the need for the Government of Myanmar to establish the conditions and create an atmosphere conducive to an inclusive and credible process, including the full participation of all political actors and respect for fundamental political freedoms.

The Security Council reaffirms its unwavering support for the Secretary-General's good offices mission and expresses its

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appreciation for the work of his Special Adviser, Ibrahim Gambari. The Security Council encourages the Government of Myanmar and all parties concerned to cooperate fully with the United Nations.

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The Security Council welcomes the important role that the ASEAN countries continue to play in supporting the United Nation's good offices mission.

The Security Council affirms its commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Myanmar and, in that context, reiterates that the future of Myanmar lies in the hands of all of its people.

The Security Council remains seized of the matter.

End Myanmar PRST text.
Khalilzad